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FORCED LABOR CAMPS IN THE USSR

1. All prison camps in Russia are under the jurisdiction of GULAG (Glavnoye Upravleniye Lagerei) [Central Administration of Camps] with the main office in Moscow. GULAG is directly responsible to the Minister of Internal Affairs, Kruglov.
2. The camps are generally divided into three categories, as follows:
  - a. Hard labor camps (katorzhni)
  - b. Government camps (rezhimni)
  - c. Open camps (vidkpiti)
3. Kolya [in the far eastern Siberian Arctic] is the center of the hard labor camps. Prisoners convicted in accordance with Articles 58 and 59 of the Legal Code are sent there. Article 58, with all subdivisions, covers political offenses, i.e., activities directed against the State (high treason), which are punishable by 15 to 20 years of hard labor. The sentence of 25 years has been substituted for capital punishment, which does not exist "de jure." Article 59 deals with armed robberies and murders. Prisoners sentenced for these crimes to 15 or 20 years of penal servitude are considered incorrigible and are sent to the Kolya hard labor camps. The inmates of a hard labor camp hardly ever leave it alive; therefore, little is known of their lot outside of the MVD. Hard labor camps are completely closed to the outside world, which means that the prisoners have no communication whatsoever with their families and the free world in general. They receive no printed matter such as newspapers or books, have no right to correspond with their families or friends. They are not permitted to receive either food or money, or any other kind of help, from outside. They are completely isolated.

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4. The second category of the camps, called government camps, have their centers in Siberia and the Urals, and are thickly distributed over the USSR territory from the River Volga to the Far East.
5. Prisoners at government camps have been convicted under many different articles of the Legal Code, such as Articles 58, 59, the Law [Zakon] of 7 August 1932, Articles 162, 193, 72, 74, the Decree [Ukaz] of 26 December 1941, the Decree of June 1941, and others, with sentences running from one to ten years of penal servitude.
6. The inmates of a government camp must obey strictly the following camp regulations:
  - a. Every prisoner must work and fulfill his assignment. (The assignments are so heavy that it is impossible for a hungry man to fulfill them.)
  - b. If a convict refuses to work, a second trial is instituted, with the result that he is transferred to a hard labor camp.
  - c. Penalty for nonfulfillment of an assignment is solitary confinement and diminished rations. The prisoner spends every night in a solitary confinement cell, and receives 300 grams of bread daily for three successive days instead of the regulation ration of 650 grams daily.
  - d. The inmate must adhere strictly to the prescribed schedule of the day, and must follow the rules in respect to his personal appearance, to wit: he must wear camp clothes, shave his head and face, and so forth. There are many regulations governing his life in a camp. [The only difference between the hard labor camps, and government camps is that prisoners at the government camps are permitted to receive packages, money, and letters from home. They are thus in contact with the outside world and can get some help. As to actual work, it is the same hard labor in both cases.]
7. The third category comprises camps located all over the territory of the USSR, beginning with the region of Volga River and extending west. They are called open camps. The inmates of these camps are convicted in accordance with the bytovy [ordinary] articles of the legal code [those dealing with minor criminal offenses], the sentences being short terms of imprisonment, from six months to five years. These camps are also called "T.K." (Trudovyye Kolonii) [Labor colonies].
8. A great many of these camps are located in the following industrial centers: Murmansk, Leningrad, Moscow, Minsk, Bryansk, and Kharkov, and the Donbas in the Ukraine. (The central deportation point for prisoners from all Ukrainian prisons is located in Kharkov. They are assembled at this point, and thence transported in gangs to hard labor and government camps, to Kolyma, or to other Siberian and Ural camps.)
9. Open camps, which are not always controlled by the MVD, as is the case with hard labor and government camps, can be found in almost every military district, and are then called army camps. The inmates work on construction of military installations.
10. The responsibility for the internal security of all camps is vested in the organs of State Security, while that for external security is vested in the MVD. Prisoners at all camps are deprived of civil rights and are under the jurisdiction of the operational organs of the State Security which is headed by the O.S. (Osoboye Soveshchaniye or "Troika") [Special Committee or Committee of Three] with the main office in Moscow. In every camp there is a so-called Ocho (Oper. Chekistski Otdel) [Operational Cheka Section]. These organs, especially the O.S., examine all important cases and pass sentences in absentia. The sentences are final, without appeal, since the Supreme Court itself cannot commute a sentence passed by the O.S.
11. In addition to the above-described camps in the USSR, there are specially established "zones," where thousands of people, perhaps even millions, are congregated. They are deprived not only of civil rights but of every

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elementary human right; their status is that of beasts of burden. They are hungry, barefoot and naked, and they perform hard labor free.

12. Their only guilt is the love of their native land and the hatred of the Moscow Bolshevik oppressors. For this, they have been resettled, under false names, in the Siberian and Ural wastes, where the remainder of their strength is sapped and where they perish en masse.
13. Most of these unhappy men come from the Ukraine, Belorussia, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, and from the lower Caucasus and the Caucasus proper. They have refused to become Moscow Bolshevik slaves but fought for their freedom.
14. In all the camps described above, prisons, and special zones, distributed all over the Soviet Union, there are now, according to a statement made in April 1948 by one of the camp chiefs, 46 million sic prisoners of different categories: "prisoner, repressed, limited," and other categories, who are expiating their guilt, with "honest labor," before the "mother country," and who can be called upon tomorrow to join the ranks of free citizens in the "defense of their mother country."
15. The following is a description of one of the MVD camps in the USSR.

"UNZHLAG" MVD USSR

16. The Unzhlag camp (Unzhenski Trudovo-ispravitelny Lager) (Unzha Corrective Labor Camp) is located above the river Unzha. "Above" here probably refers to height. The camp is south of the Unzha River. This strip of land constitutes a part of the taiga and is covered with virgin forest, where the gray bear lorded it once upon a time.
17. The southern part of this area is in the northeast of Gorki Oblast, and the northern part in the southeast of the Kostroma Oblast. The whole area occupied by the camp is 100 kilometers long and about 50 to 70 kilometers wide.
18. The camp was founded in the winter of 1930. Its first inmates were so-called "counterrevolutionists" and the "unreliable elements," victims of Bolshevik collectivization in the Ukraine.
19. These people were brought over in groups of 800 to 1,000 men to the station Sukhobezvodnaya, unloaded there, and then driven, under strong escort, into the woods. In hard bitter frost and amidst deep snow they built shelters for the guards and for themselves out of tents and covered the floors with pine branches and needles. Thus, living half-naked and hungry, they began their first hard labor; they built the zone (fence), a guardhouse, and then barracks for themselves. 50X1-HUM
20. Not one of these men ever regained his freedom; almost all of them died of starvation, exposure, and privations. Those who survive are still in it. 50X1-HUM

21.

Without trial transferred as a "socially dangerous" 800 men of the same category, from the Rostov prison to the Unzhlag forests. Of these 800 men, who came together in 1930, only three were still alive. The rest died of starvation and exposure coupled with hard labor. 50X1-HUM

22. The others are: Mayboroda, of Kamenets-Podolsk Oblast, Ukrainian

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23. Pavlo Mizhitsky. of Rostov Oblast. Ukrainian. [REDACTED]
24. Vasil Pavlovich Zarichny. of Kamenets-Podolsk Oblast. Staroushvtsky Ukrainian. [REDACTED] 50X1-HUM
25. The above-mentioned prisoners all came in 1930, in separate groups of 500 [sic] to 1,000 men. Perhaps two or three men of each group are still alive. They are not allowed to leave the camp.
- \* 26. Up to 1937 the Unzhlag was one of the hard labor camps in the USSR, which means that a prisoner who refused to work was shot dead on the spot, that inmates were not permitted to correspond with their families, and that they had no contact whatsoever with the free world. Up to 1937 only political prisoners, so-called "socially dangerous", were sent there. There were no criminals. Only after 1937 did this become an open but [sic; as well as?] "government" camp. Prisoners convicted under many different articles and with different sentences began to appear. They were granted the privilege of writing to their families once in three months, and of receiving one reply and one food package during that time. However, the hard labor, hunger, and shootings did not cease, and prisoners continued to die in great numbers. These conditions prevailed until 1945, the end of the war.
- 27. After the war, the authorities began to save the labor force. Food rations were improved, so that fewer men died of starvation. Spontaneous shootings of prisoners for refusal to work stopped, and second trials were introduced instead (10 refusals - 10 years). Better medical help was also provided for the sick. However, the labor norms were unmitigated; on the contrary, the norms were raised each year and the convicts were driven to death.

VERTICAL ADMINISTRATIVE SCHEME

28. All camps in the USSR are under the jurisdiction of the Minister of Internal Affairs, Kruglov, who administers them through the GULAG. Every camp is a self-sufficient unit, independent of other camps. It is administered by an Upravleniye [Administration] headed by a Chief of Administration, who is directly responsible to GULAG. The Chief of Administration regulates the whole life of the camp through referenturas [sections] of the Administration.
29. Authority is further distributed among chiefs of the camp stations. (There are 31 camp stations in the Unzhlag.) Every chief of a camp station has assistants, chiefs of departments, who are subordinate to the chief of station, as well as to the chiefs of sections of the Administration. A chief of a station has unlimited power over the station, as the Chief of Administration has over the whole camp.

HORIZONTAL ADMINISTRATIVE SCHEME

30. In order to administer a camp covering an area of 100 kilometers in length and up to 70 kilometers in width, containing over 50,000 prisoners, the camp is divided into stations. There are 31 of them in the Unzhlag, 50X1-HUM and they are distributed in checker-board fashion.

The Administration of the Camp and the "otdely" (referenturas) [sections]

31. Chief of the Camp - Captain Ivanov, engineer. Russian [REDACTED]
32. Deputy Chief - Lieut. Colonel Abkin of the MVD. [REDACTED] 50X1-HUM
- The Otdel or OChO (Oper. Chekistski Otdel) [Operational Chekist Section]
33. [The Otdel is composed as follows:]
- a. Chief of the "OChO" - Major Tyulenev, State Security, who is also chief of the investigation section. [REDACTED] 50X1-HUM

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b. Deputy Chief of the OChO in the investigation section - Major Kulikovskiy, State Security, [REDACTED] 50X1-HUM

c. Senior investigator for political cases - Senior Lieutenant Mamoyko, State Security, Belorussian, [REDACTED] 50X1-HUM

34. The total number of Chekist ( OChO ) investigators attached to the camp is 15 to 18. All of them have military ranks not below that of a State Security lieutenant.

35. In addition, OChO has at each section its own operational staff officer (a Chekist investigator with a rank not below that of State Security lieutenant) who is always at the section and who arrests anyone who arouses his suspicion. He also conducts preliminary investigation (starts the case) and then transfers the prisoner to OChO.

36. At OChO, there is a tsentralny izolyator [solitary confinement center], the chief of which is a Chekist lieutenant, Smirnov, [REDACTED]

37. There is a public prosecutor and a court at the Administration.

38. The prosecutor is a lawyer of the first rank, Colonel Voronov; and his deputy is Captain Malishev. 50X1-HUM

39. The court consists of the judge, jurymen, and secretary. The judge is a lieutenant, lawyer of the second rank (name unknown).

The Second Section [Vtoroi Otdel] or URS (Upravleniye Rabochei Sily) [Administration of Labor Force]

40. The chief of the URS is Captain Tarantsev, MVD

41. The Second Section has a Personnel Section, whose chief is Lieutenant Polyakov, MVD.

42. The functions of URS are to receive new prisoners, to take charge of them, and to be responsible for them. Every incoming prisoner must carry papers showing his name, crime for which committed, article of the legal code under which convicted, and the sentence. URS accepts only prisoners supplied with the necessary documents. It opens their case files and keeps on record all the information concerning them. URS distributes the inmates among the stations and resettles them in other camps, if necessary. No prisoner can either enter or leave a camp without the knowledge of the URS.

43. The URS has subsections, called "URCh" (Upravleniye Rabochei Chasti) [Labor Subsection Administration], located at the stations. They have no right to issue their own directives but follow strictly the instructions issued by URS. URCh may transfer a prisoner from one station of the camp to another only upon instructions from URS.

Production Subsection (Proizvodstvennaya Chast).

44. The Chief of the Production Subsection is Captain Talabayev, MVD.

45. This section is concerned with the fulfillment of plans prepared by GULAG. For instance, Unzhlag is ordered to produce and deliver to the State a certain number of millions of cubic meters of firewood per hour, or a certain quantity of special items, such as wooden blocks for rifle stocks, airplane plywood, or railway ties. This assignment must be carried out. Therefore, as soon as the GULAG directive is received by the camp administration, its planning section works out the distribution of the assignment among different stations of the camp, according to the number of prisoners attached to each station.

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46. The Chief of the Production Subsection and the Chiefs of the OLPs (Otdelny Lagerny Punkt) (Separate Camp Station) are directly responsible for the fulfillment of the plan, which must be carried out at all costs. They are severely reprimanded for failure to achieve that. The planning section of OLP reports daily by phone the results attained the previous day to the planning section of the Administration, which in its turn transmits the report to GULAG in Moscow. Thus, GULAG keeps a daily check on the progress of work in all the camps of the USSR, and, if production is lagging, takes punitive measures itself. The chief of the separate camp station involved, and the chief of Production Section are not only fired but tried for sabotage. If the plan is fulfilled, they are rewarded with praise and promotion, also large premiums. In sheer self-interest, therefore, all their efforts are directed towards the fulfillment of the quota, irrespective of the cost in human life. No one cares what happens to the prisoner, as no one is responsible for the number of deaths in a camp.

Timber Marketing Trust (Lisozbut) (In Russian, Lesosbyt)

47. The Chief of the Timber Marketing Trust is attached to the Administration of the camp. He has representatives at every camp station who see to it that the output at that particular station is strictly "in accordance with the plan", and that the timber is loaded and dispatched on time. They have at their disposal truck columns of prisoners to do the job. If the output is not up to quota, or if the railway cars are detained too long, the chief and his representatives are heavily fined or put on trial. Therefore, they squeeze the last drop of blood from the prisoners to have the quota filled on time.

General Supply Section (Otdel Obshechego Snabzheniya)

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48. The Chief of the General Supply Section at the Unzhlag named Shekhter.
49. The duty of this section is to keep the camp supplied with food, fodder, clothing, footwear, the necessary inventory, and spare parts for the machinery used in the work. This includes trucks for the transportation of timber to the warehouses, electric saws, hand saws, axes, tractors, and the necessary spare parts for the machines cutting the ties, electric power stations, etc. There are three supply bases serving the camp:
- a. Base No. 1 - Sukhobezvodnaya
  - b. Base No. 2 - Lapshanga
  - c. Base No. 3 - Kaysk
50. Great quantities of food supplies, sufficient for a whole year, are delivered to these bases in the fall. Grain comes from the Ukraine, fish from Astrakhan, dry goods from the Moscow region (Vladimir, Ivanov, and others). There is a mill at the Sukhobezvodnaya base where grain is ground into flour, which is then distributed to the separate camp stations.
51. The General Supply Section has its subdivisions, ChOS (Chast Obshechego Snabzheniya) (Part of General Supply Section) at every camp station. They handle mess rooms, baking shops, storehouses for provisions and clothing, and the "subsidiary economy." The "subsidiary economy" uprooted the stumps on several hectares of cleared forest, and planted them with potatoes, cabbage, and turnips. The vegetables are stored and used for prisoners' food.
52. Subordinate to the General Supply Section are also the "selkhozy" (In Russian, selkhozy or "village economies" Nos. 2, 4, and 5. They also have a cleared area of several scores of hectares where they grow potatoes, turnips, and carrots which are also used for prisoners' food. No other vegetables are grown here because of unfavorable soil and climatic conditions.

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Section of Capital Construction and Maintenance (Viddil Kapitalnoy Pobudovy ta Remontiv) [in Russian, Otdel Kapitalnoi Postroiki i Remonta]

53. This section constructs, when necessary, new separate camp stations, new camp zones, and all the buildings on the camp's terrain. It also takes care of all the necessary repairs. The section erected in 1947 a large building at the Sukhobezvodnaya base for the housing of the Administration of the Camp, a club for the free personnel, and a brand new camp station, the 16th, which is at present "under the orders" of the 3rd station.

Community Welfare Subsection (Komunalno-pobutova Chast) [in Russian, Komunalno-bytovaya Chast]

54. The chief of this subsection is at the Administration but he has representatives in every OLP [Separate Camp Station]. The purpose of this subsection is to create proper cultural and welfare conditions for the prisoners. A certain number of prisoners (invalids) who are under the orders of this subsection do guard duty in the barracks. During the night, when prisoners are asleep, the men on duty stay awake and watch that the prisoners do not steal anything from one another. During the working hours, these men are supposed to bring water, sweep the floors, and see to it that no one from the adjoining barracks comes in to steal. There is a motion picture projector at the subsection, and every camp station is supposed to have one film shown a month; the central agitation brigade must arrange for at least one or two shows every three months.

Cultural and Educational Subsection or "KVCh" (Kulturno Vospitatelnaya Chast)

55. The chief of this subsection is also at the Administration but he has representatives in every camp station. Every one of the representatives must be a Party member and possess higher than secondary education. His business is to conduct propaganda work among the prisoners. He works in close cooperation with the operational staff officer. It is his job to know the prisoners' state of mind. He also keeps a close watch over the fulfillment of the daily quota at that particular station. In other words, he is the eye of the Soviet authorities. The prisoners' incoming and outgoing mail goes through the hands of the chief of KVCh, who censors it. He has a deputy (a trustworthy prisoner) and an artist (painter) to help him in his work. The artist paints, for the "embellishment" of the mess rooms and the zones, posters and slogans along the following lines: "Who does not work does not eat," "Work in the USSR is a deed of valor, honor, and glory," "More timber for the country," and the like.
56. Every morning, before the prisoners are taken out to work, the deputy chief of KVCh bestows praises on those who fulfill or even exceed their quotas.

Medical Section (Sanotdel)

57. The Chief of the Medical Section of the Administration is the MVD captain, Idkin, a Russian, Party member with a higher education. The functions of this section are to extend medical help to the prisoners, to establish their categories according to which the work is allotted, and to fight contagious diseases (which often crop up and spread).
58. Under the order of the chief of the Medical Section are the chiefs of the medical units located at the separate stations, as well as three large hospitals in the area, where there are always more than 6,000 prisoners under treatment.
59. Hospital No. 1, for medical and contagious diseases, is located at Chibir and has an X-ray machine. The director of the hospital is Dr. Rohal, who has good medical personnel, consisting of physicians, nurses, and attendants (drawn from the ranks of prisoners), working under him. The constant occupancy of this hospital is about 2,500 cases, both prisoners and free men.

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60. Hospital No. 2, surgical, with separate eye and ear buildings, is located at Lapshanga. The director of this hospital is Dr. Nikonova, with fairly good medical personnel of doctors, nurses, and attendants (selected from prisoners). In her charge are about 2,000 cases.
61. Hospital No. 3, for tuberculosis and pellagra, is located at San Gorodok. Its director is Dr. Bohomiliv, who also has fairly good personnel of doctors, nurses, and attendants. This hospital also has an X-ray machine. This hospital always has over 3,000 prisoners under treatment.
62. Although the medical personnel in all three institutions is comparatively good, the death rate is high. This is due to the lack of proper medication, and to the insufficient supply of medication which is on hand.
63. Besides the hospitals, there are infirmaries at each camp station where from 100 to 300 prisoners (depending on the size of the station) are constantly hospitalized. The number of the sick greatly increases during the winter and in the spring because of exhaustion, hunger, and frostbites. All sorts of cases are admitted to these infirmaries, beginning with ordinary injuries, such as traumatic amputation of a hand or foot, down to pellagra, typhus, dysentery, malaria, and other cases. The majority of the patients are pellagra cases - the result of poor food and hard work. Although serious cases are transferred to the above-mentioned hospitals, the death rate in the infirmaries is still higher than in the hospitals. This can be explained by the fact that the infirmaries have no medication to speak of at their disposal - iodine and aspirin is all they have - and that the "higher authorities" pay scant attention to them.

Transportation Section (Transportno-rezhimny Otdel), or TRO

64. The Unzhlag has its own railway, the Unzhlag Branch, and its rolling stock consists of eight engines and a certain number of cars. The Unzhlag Branch begins at the Sukhobezvodnaya station, which is situated on the Gorki-Kirov line of the Gorki Railway, and runs straight north for 89 kilometers. [The direction of the railway is in fact nearly magnetic north.] On both sides of the branch are scattered, checker-board fashion, separate camp stations. Short sidings connect them with the main branch.
65. This railway network carries provisions and other supplies to the camp, and prepared material from the camp. The Unzhlag engines pull the cars as far as Sukhobezvodnaya Station, where the Gorki Railway takes over and delivers the goods to their destination with its own engines.
66. The task of the TRO is to keep the camp railway in working order, and the rolling stock in good repair; to build new sidings, and, when necessary, to extend the existing line. For this purpose TRO has three stations, a car and engine shed at Sukhobezvodnaya station, and a workshop.
67. The TRO runs a special train every day from the Sukhobezvodnaya Station to the Zelny lug station and back again. This train is called teplushka [heated] and is made up of the following cars:
  - a. two cars, strongly bound on the outside with iron bars, for transportation of the prisoners to places of assignment, between different points of the camp, or to solitary confinement and back again;
  - b. one hospital car for transportation of the sick to the hospital;
  - c. two cars for free people, i.e., guards, administrative staff, and the free population settled in villages on the territory of the camp;
  - d. one freight car for transportation of all sorts of freight;
  - e. one mail coach for carrying letters and parcels;

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- f. two cars for forwarding agents who handle food, fodder, and the appliances necessary for work.
68. The above-mentioned train leaves every day at 9 p.m. and returns the next day at noon.
69. For fast work TRO has three hand cars: the first one for the Administration, the second one for the OChO, and the third one for the security staff and the fire company.
70. All these sections and subsections help the Administration to run the camp and to squeeze the last drop of blood from the prisoners.

The OLP (Otdelny Lagerny Punkt) /Separate Camp Station/

71. The Unzhlag camp, as we mentioned above, is divided into 31 stations or OLPs. describe one of these stations.
72. A station is built in the midst of an impenetrable forest, near a river or a brook. The place is selected with a view of having at least 10 to 15 kilometers in perimeter of industrial timber. There must be, for instance, a sufficient number of birch trees for the production of rifle blocks (stocks for rifles and automatics), airplane plywood, aspen trees for matches, pines for the manufacture of paper and shipbuilding, spruce for pit props, and so on.
73. There is no set standard for the size of a station. The largest two at the Unzhlag are the 3rd and the 6th stations. The 3rd station has an average contingent of over 3,000 prisoners. It operates a mechanical sewing workshop which produces clothes for the army as well as for the camp. This station occupies an area 2,000 meters long and 1,000 meters wide. The length of the 6th station is 3,000 and the width 2,000 meters. This station has a footwear factory (shoes and felt boots) as well as a watch repair shop.
74. The rest of the stations are much smaller. The area of the smallest one is 800 x 800 meters; the average size is 1,000 x 1,000 meters.

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Construction and Security Measures at the OLP

75. An area of one square kilometer is surrounded by a strong wall (zone). This wall is built as follows: at intervals of 30 - 40 meters, strong heavy piles are driven into the ground. Onto the piles are driven heavy beams, to which are bolted posts three meters long and 15 to 20 cm in diameter. These posts are sunk  $\frac{1}{2}$  meter under ground and they stand  $2\frac{1}{2}$  meters above the ground. All the piles are surmounted by poles, each 70 cm long, curving inward, which support a thick net of barbed wire. There is a strip of ploughed and harrowed ground on both sides of the wall, three meters wide on the inside and five meters on the outside. The outside ploughed strips are lined with stakes, 50 to 70 meters apart, which hold up live electric wires. Electric lights attached to each pile illuminate the entire wall and the ploughed strips at night. There are four watch towers, with shelters for the watchmen, one at each corner of the wall. From tower to tower a wire is stretched, to which dogs running on the ground are loosely tied. Every watchman is responsible for his particular sector. Should a prisoner escape from a given sector, its watchman gets 10 years. Further supervision is provided by the Nadzor Sluzhba /Supervisory Service/, the members of which walk day and night along the path on the inside of the ploughed strip.
76. The only entrance to the station is through the main gate, which is always kept locked. There is a sentry-box at the gate, and the sentry lets prisoners out in the morning in groups, previously listed and signed for by the convoy, and lets them in again in the evening according to the

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same list. The administrative workers carry passes, and are allowed to pass the gate individually. The sentries are very strict and will not allow passage even to the chief of the OLP without a pass.

77. Outside the wall, about 50 meters from the sentry-box, stands a fairly large building, called "Vokhr", housing an MVD guard platoon of about 30 to 80 men (depending on the size of the OLP and the number of prisoners attached to it).
78. The following buildings are also on the outside: the house of the chief of the OLP, clubhouse, fire station, power station, appliances shop, and several buildings where "free" people live.
79. On the inside of the wall stand the following buildings: the chancery which houses the offices of the operational staff officer, the chief of the OLP, the deputy chief, the production chief, the chief of supplies, the chief of the regimen, the URCh, the planning section, the quota section, and the general bookkeeping office.
80. In this area are located also the medical unit, a bathhouse, mess rooms, a club, a bakery, a food store, a warehouse, prisoners' barracks, and the solitary confinement cells. (All the above buildings, with notations to them, are shown on the sketch.)

Guards

81. For prevention of escapes every camp station has its own guard platoon, consisting of a commander (with the rank not lower than lieutenant), a deputy commander (sergeant major), a political leader (a lieutenant who substitutes for the commander), 25 soldiers, and a canine corps. (They feed and train the hounds to catch fugitives. Actually, prisoners are more afraid of the dogs than the guards because a dog will follow a trail and never let go until it tracks its man down.)
82. The commander and the political leader have their own separate quarters, while the rest of the platoon lives in Vokhr barracks. As far as the military training is concerned, these men stand very low; they get practically no training. Attention is concentrated on the shooting skill and on political education: they are taught, first, how to shoot an escapee, and, second, not to have any commerce with the prisoners.

Military Equipment of the Platoon

83. The platoon is equipped with light firearms, i.e., all soldiers carry German Mausers. Troops of the canine corps carry automatic PPS [7.62 submachine guns of 1941 model] and revolvers. The commanding officer and the political leader carry pistols. The platoon has also two "Dekhtyarev" machine guns [Degtyarev heavy machine guns of 1939 model] kept in readiness in the barracks.
84. The primary duty of the guarding staff is to guard the station against escapes. The responsibility for an escape lies not only with the watchmen of the sector (for which the watchman gets 10 years), but also with the platoon commander and with the officer of the guard. If a member of the platoon shoots a fugitive dead, he receives an award and the platoon commander gets a citation and a promotion.

Supervisory Service (Nadzor Sluzhba)

85. The MVD staff is responsible for the external security of a station. The state security is in charge of the internal security. The latter is composed of a chief (Chief of Regimen) and four supervisors. The supervisors, two at a time, are on alternate duty day and night inside

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the station. They watch for any signs of planned escape, both individual and in groups; they see to it that camp regulations are observed by the inmates, and that there are no fights, robberies, or thefts.

The MVD Security Staff in Unzhlag

86. An MVD detachment is attached to the camp for additional security and in order to force the prisoners to work.

Vertical and Horizontal Structure of the Security Staff

87. An MVD "Camp Security Staff" was formed at the GULAG, with headquarters in Moscow. This staff is subordinate to Kruglov, and is responsible for the security of all camps of the USSR.
88. The MVD detachment attached to the Unzhlag has its headquarters in Sukhobezvodnaya. It is headed by an MVD major (name unknown). This detachment is responsible for the security of the whole camp. It also helps the Operational Chekist Section to perform its duties.
89. The detachment (military structure unknown) is divided into divisions (diviziony), each one responsible for the security of four to six camp stations.
90. Divisions are further subdivided into platoons which were discussed at some length in our description of the OLP.
91. In addition to the above, the whole territory of the camp is covered by a net of "operational points," subordinate to the operational section of the local MVD staff. There is such a "point" at every village, farm, forester's house, etc., and it consists of two soldiers, called operational workers. Their duty is to see that no escaped prisoner passes through their territory.
92. These "points" are most thickly distributed in the so-called "dead strip" - a stretch of land, about 30 kilometers wide, all around the camp, forming a sort of live wall, which is very hard for an escaped prisoner to slip through.
93. In other words, the MVD staff are the bullies who help a score of camp parasite-chiefs to suck the blood of some fifty thousand prisoners.

Is Escape Possible?

94. Although every prisoner from the day of his imprisonment to the last day of his term - however long - thinks of nothing else but escape, and, although no day passes but someone tries his luck, very few of them succeed. Out of 200 attempts, one perhaps would be successful, and that one would require a tremendous effort.
95. Very detailed plans must be laid in advance, if an individual or a group is to succeed. To that effect, a prisoner's physical condition is of paramount importance; a physically weak man has absolutely no chance.
96. Secondly, detailed knowledge of the terrain is imperative, for a man, even having managed to escape from the station, would go astray in the unknown forest and in the end would stumble on another station or a village, where he would be caught.
97. Thirdly, a prisoner must lay a store of food sufficient for several days. Once outside the camp, he can obtain no food without falling into the enemy's hands.

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98. Food is one of the hardest problems in planning an escape. Every working prisoner gets 650 grams of bread a day, 350 grams in the morning and 300 grams in the evening. Now, 300 grams of bread to a hungry man is as much as a fly to a hungry dog. Not only is he unable to forego any of it in order to lay a store; he cannot even wait 10 to 15 minutes to eat it with his "balandova" [?]. For that matter, even if he had the will power to go hungry for several days, the resulting weakened physical condition would preclude any such risky and difficult undertaking as an escape.
99. This food problem is well known to the Administration and to the Security officers. That is why a prisoner is not permitted to receive the whole food parcel sent him from home at one time. He is rationed. When a food package is received at the camp, the addressee prisoner is called to the food store. There the package is opened in the presence of the Chief of the Regiment and a bookkeeper, its contents are examined and listed, and the prisoner is made to sign a receipt for it. Then he is allowed to eat as much of the food as he wants to, the remainder to be kept at the store. A receipt to that effect is issued to the prisoner. The following days, as long as the food lasts, the prisoner, upon presentation of the receipt, will be allowed to eat as much as he can consume in one day.
100. Another problem is civilian clothes. If the prisoner wears his camp uniform, the first militia man he encounters, or civilian, or even a member of the village administration, will arrest him. He must also cover his tracks with paprika or a calcium hypochlorite mixture, or some other such substance, lest the two hounds attached to every station get the scent and follow the trail for scores of kilometers.
101. No less important problem is presented by the escape itself. If the prisoner succeeds under cover of night in scaling the wall, there is the ploughed strip to be crossed, where he will leave footprints. The path lining the strip is patrolled the whole night. As soon as the footprints are noticed, the patrol gives an alarm signal - two rifle shots. At that signal, the whole security staff is alerted. The commander takes 10 to 15 armed men with him, plus the canine corps, and rushes to the place of the alarm. Having ascertained that some one has actually escaped, he orders the hounds to be released and sends his deputy in pursuit, together with some armed soldiers. The Commander then returns to the guardhouse, where the whole alerted security staff is waiting for him. Then he goes with the remaining soldiers and the camp administration to the barracks, where he rouses all prisoners and calls the roll. The number and the names of the missing men are immediately reported by phone to the MVD Security Staff at the Central Administration. The Security staff then alerts the whole camp, all the stations, all the operating points, and every habitation. The alarm and the search last four days. If the prisoner is not caught within that time, the search is discontinued, because it means that the fugitive has crossed the "dead strip."
102. After that, the security staff informs the Uholovny Rozshuk [in Russian, Ugolovny Rozysk - Criminal Investigation Department], which, supplied with documents and photographs, continues the search for the escaped prisoner all over the USSR. It is obvious from the above that escape is well-nigh impossible.

Escape from the Convoy

103. As mentioned above, the convoy is responsible for the prisoners during transportation to and from work, and during working hours. Prisoners are allowed to pass through the gate of the camp upon presentation of a list of their names signed by the convoy guards. Outside the wall prisoners are ranged in pairs and told that, in case of disobedience or attempt to escape, they will be shot by the guards without warning. Then they are asked whether everyone has understood the warning, and, if the answer is

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yes, they are ordered to hold each one by the hand and proceed, without looking back, in a given direction. If a prisoner as much as takes one step out of line, he is shot dead then and there.

104. The smallest convoy consists of two soldiers for a group of 25 prisoners, the number of guards being increased, as need be, to four or more.
105. Individual escape while being conveyed is impossible; a group might attempt it and get away with it with very few losses. Should a group agree on concerted action and start running in different directions at the same time, a few might be shot by the guards while the rest would escape. However, prisoners usually discard this method, because it affords them no chance to go far without being detected and caught or shot by the alerted security staff.

Can Freedom be Bought with a Bribe?

106. Bribing is out of the question because of very strict controls. Reports are submitted daily, by phone, by each OLP to the camp administration and thence to Moscow. They contain the following information: the total number of prisoners at the station, the number of those in good health (here the category of work performed is stated), the number of the sick and invalids (groups enumerated), the number of prisoners who went out to work that day (if one stayed behind, the reason why). These reports constitute the main reason why no one would dare to help a prisoner to escape; no one would take the risk of a 10-year term of hard labor or jail. If a prisoner is missing from the station, the fact must be reported that very day to the administration. When a prisoner dies, a committee is convoked prior to his burial, consisting of the operational staff officer, the chief of the station involved, the chief of the medical unit, the chief of the URCh (Labor Subsection Administration), and the platoon commander. The committee, having made certain that the prisoner is indeed dead, issues a statement to that effect. A copy of this statement, together with all the papers pertaining to the said prisoner, is transmitted, as soon as possible, to the central administration. The Administration then removes the name of the prisoner from the register of that particular station.
107. Should someone plan to obtain release of a prisoner by staging a spurious death, then the whole committee of five would have to be bribed. Such an attempt would obviously come to naught, as no one member would dare to consent, all being afraid of each other.
108. To bribe a prisoner's release by staging an escape would not work either. Three security officers would be involved: the guard on duty, the chief of guards, and the platoon commander; penalty for an escape for each one of them is 10 years' hard labor or jail. Obviously no one would take that for one or two thousand rubles.
109. It is evident from the above arguments that it is very difficult, virtually impossible, to buy a prisoner's freedom.
110. There is one possibility, however, namely aktirovka (declaration of a prisoner as completely unfit, because of an incurable disease, for work and life in general). Under the law, the aktirovka is possible only in the case of prisoners convicted under the criminal code; there is no such provision for political prisoners. A medical board consisting of the director of the hospital, the head doctor, and a specialist in the given disease meets, examines the case, arrives at a diagnosis, and makes out a joint report stating its conclusions that the case cannot be cured at the camp. The prisoner is then immediately transferred, accompanied by the report, to the polyclinic at the central administration. The findings of the first board are then checked by the central medical board, which prepares its own statement, and submits that to Moscow. If Moscow approves, the prisoner is then released.

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111. Therefore, if someone could be so lucky as to induce, with bribes, both medical boards to invent a grave disease for a healthy man and to prepare the required statements, a man might regain his freedom.

Changes which Took Place in the Unzhlag in 1948

- \*112. As mentioned above, in 1937 the Unzhlag became a government and open camp [sic; combined?]. At that time, male and female prisoners of both categories, i.e., convicted under both the political and the criminal articles of the legal code, living at the camp, enjoyed almost equal rights. The criminal articles cover the following offenses: theft of communal property, rape, light assault, deliberate abandonment of jobs, forgery of documents, speculation, etc. Like the prisoners convicted under the criminal law, political prisoners were allowed to occupy administrative positions at the camp as specialists, such as bookkeepers, forwarding agents, accountants, and managers of bakeries, mess halls, stores, etc.
113. Again at the beginning of 1948 a marked change took place. All the women prisoners were removed from the camp, and special female camps were created for them. In March, 1948, an order was received directing the administration to remove all political prisoners (convicted under Article 58 of the legal code), whatever their value as specialists, from administrative posts and to keep them strictly at hard labor in the forest; the administrative posts were to be filled with the other category. The order was carried out to the letter.
114. In May of the same year another order came. This time, the two categories were completely separated, and special sections were created for political prisoners, who were called "traitors to their mother country" or "fascists."
115. In these new stations, built specially for political prisoners, the guard personnel was changed twice and the convoy doubled; work assignments were increased and the regulations tightened, the latter being of no less burden to the inmates than hard labor itself.
116. This statement was prepared in 1948.

Comment: The definitions of open and government camps given in paragraphs 4 and 7 are inconsistent with the usage of these terms in paragraphs 26 and 112. The literal translation is adhered to as closely as possible.

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Explanation of the Sketch

The following notes are in explanation of the sketch attached representing one of the stations of the Unzhlag Camp, MVD.

1. Zone (fence) /wall/
2. Gate (constituting the only entrance and exit of the station)
3. Guardhouse
- 3a. Passage through guardhouse (individual, with pass)
4. Chancery
5. Barracks (housing prisoners working in administrative posts)
6. Health Department and hospital
7. Bathhouse
8. Mess room and club (80)
9. Kitchen
10. Warehouse
11. Well
12. Bakery
13. Solitary confinement cells
- 14, 15, 16, 17. Barracks for prisoners
18. Watch towers
19. Paths

Buildings marked with Roman numerals are outside the wall. They contain the MVD Security Staff, the Administration, and free personnel as follows:

- I. Security Platoon
- II. Living quarters for the Chief of the Station and his deputy
- III. Club
- IV. Cooperative
- V. Central telephone exchange (switchboard)
- VI. Tool Shop (axes, saws, etc.)
- VII. Electric power station
- VIII, IX, X. Fire stations and living quarters for the Chief and personnel.
- XI. A house for administrative personnel
- XII. "Konbaza" /Convoy headquarters?/
- O. Shed for winter storage of potatoes, cabbage, and parsnips.

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**Attachment 1**

A Station of the Unzhlag Camp, MVD



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Attachment 2

Geographic Coordinates for Place Names  
Mentioned in this Document

1. Minsk	53-50N, 27-35E
2. Bryansk	53-15N, 48-45E
3. Kharkov	40-57N, 48-45E
4. Gorki	56-15N, 43-58E
5. Sukhobezvodnaya	57-03N, 44-55E
6. Lapshanga	57-27N, 45-03E
7. Kaysk (Kaysk Station)	57-22N, 44-41E
8. Chibir (Chibir Station)	57-08N, 44-50E
9. San Gorodok	not located (probably Sanitarny Gorodok: "Health Settlement")

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